

## **Proficient Readers and Writers . . .**

### **activate and build schema**

#### **Readers . . .**

- activate relevant prior knowledge before, during and after reading
- decide if they need additional background information about the topic, format, or language of the text they will be reading
- use their schema to enhance their understandings and to provide a framework for learning new information
- add to/change their schema as they discover new ideas and/or information in their reading

#### **Writers . . .**

- generate, select and narrow topics they care about
- think about what they know about the content, genre text format and conventions as they write
- pay attention to their own voice and style as they compose
- gather additional information about topics that are not directly related to their own experiences
- plan their writing to that they are able to capitalize on what they know and what they want to share

## Mathematicians . . .

- use current understandings as first steps in the problem solving process
- use their number sense to understand a problem
- add to schema by trying more challenging problems and hearing from others about different problem solving methods
- build understanding based on prior knowledge of math concepts
- develop purpose based on prior knowledge
- use their prior knowledge to generalize about similar problems and to choose problem solving strategies
- develop their own problems

## Researchers . . .

- frequently choose topics they know and care about
- use their prior knowledge and experience to launch investigations and ask questions
- consider what they already know to decide what they need to find out
- self evaluate according to background knowledge of what quality products look like

# THINGS TO NOTE ABOUT MODELING TEXT-TO-SELF, TEXT-TO-TEXT, AND TEXT-TO-WORLD CONNECTIONS

*(Adapted from Mosaic of Thought by Keene and Zimmermann, 1997)*

- Demonstrate how good readers think by thinking aloud.
- Model text-to-self, text-to-text, text-to-world connections separately.
- Use a variety of books.
- Model over a sustained period of time.
- Make connections to other books.
- Generate lists of background knowledge on book topics.
- Identify concepts or themes to deepen comprehension before selecting the best texts to model.
- Think about where to pause and think aloud before modeling.
- Demonstrate how to use what is known about the author or the author's style to increase comprehension.
- Demonstrate how to read different kinds of text structure (e.g., nonfiction is often read more slowly and with more rereading than fiction).
- Demonstrate how to learn what is needed before reading when background knowledge is inadequate for understanding.
- Conduct short (10 or 15 minute) mini-lessons modeling with different books for a sustained period of time (e.g., text-to-text connections for a couple of weeks).
- Make it clear how your thinking helps you understand the text better.
- Initially keep illustrations clear and concise.
- Model first delay inviting children to participate until they understand the concept being modeled.
- Invite children to share after a few demonstrations.
- During individual conferences, have children think aloud in their independent reading.
- Make classroom charts of text-to-text connections:
  - Start with a book being read.
  - List the title of a text with which it connects.
  - Have children initial their contributions.

*The Literacy Map, J. Richard Gentry, 2000*

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

**WHY** Readers can make connections while reading, synthesizing new information, deepening existing understandings, broadening beliefs and informing misconceptions.

**HOW** These connections can be:

text-to-text connections between different books and different authors

text-to-me connections between books and the reader's current personal background knowledge and experience base

text-to-the-world connections between books and information about the world around us

Exploring the connections orally, in writing or artistically provide readers with the opportunity to see how their literacy is related to internal schema, external life experiences as well as past encounters with print.

## EXTENDED ANTICIPATION GUIDE

**WHY** The purpose of an anticipation guide is to help readers activate their own background knowledge and to understand the nature of expository texts. Expository text is often difficult for readers to understand, perhaps because of its high concentration of complex information and unfamiliar or technical vocabulary. Given this, readers often have trouble absorbing information from content area texts, particularly if the information presented runs counter to their beliefs about a topic.

By responding to an Extended Anticipation Guide, readers become motivated to read as a way of supporting or modifying their prior knowledge about the content of the text. In the discussion that follows the first portion of the Guide, readers' beliefs are likely to emerge. This sets the stage for the reading itself, during which the readers come face to face with discrepancies that exist between what they believe and what the text actually says.

**WHAT** Any suitable expository text.

Part One of the Anticipation Guide: 3 to 8 teacher-generated statements designed to activate readers' background knowledge and possible misconceptions about the expository text's topic.

Part Two of the Anticipation Guide: Spaces in which readers note whether there was textual support for the choices in Part One and why the choice was correct or incorrect.

**HOW** Construct Part One of the Anticipation Guide by selecting the major concepts contained in the expository text of which readers either need to have clear understanding or may bring misconceptions. Write 5 to 10 statements about these concepts with which readers will either agree or disagree.

Invite readers to complete Part One. Follow this with a prereading discussion in which readers' beliefs are likely to emerge. This sets the stage for the reading itself, during which readers come face to face with any discrepancies that exist between what they believe and what the text actually says.

Invite readers to complete Part Two as they read the expository text and encounter information related to the triggering statements in Part One. Readers will need to determine whether the text supports their Part One choices. If it does, they need to paraphrase what the text says. If the text does not support their choices, readers need to again write the accurate information in their own words to help ensure the new information will be more readily internalized.

Post reading discussions can ensue in which readers critically examine the accuracy of their prior knowledge as well as their new-found, textually-supported information.

## EXTENDED ANTICIPATION GUIDE

### Example

#### Part 1

*Directions: Before you read your class assignment, read each statement in Part 1. If you believe that a statement is true, place a check in the 'Agree' column. If you believe that a statement is false, place a check in the 'Disagree' column. Be ready to explain your choices.*

Agree

☐

Disagree

☐

1. You can get AIDS by being near someone who has it, just as you can with a cold or the flu.

#### Part 2

*Directions: Now you will read information related to each of the statements in Part 1. If the information supports your choices above, place a check in the 'Yes' column in Part 2. Then write what the text says in your own words in column (A), under "Why is my choice correct?" If the information does not support your choices, place a check in the 'No' column. Then write what the text says in your own words in column B, under "Why is my choice incorrect?"*

Support in  
text for my  
choice

(A)

(B)

Yes

☐

No

☐

Why is my choice correct?

\_\_\_\_\_

Why is my choice incorrect?

\_\_\_\_\_

**YES/NO . . . WHY?  
IT REMINDS ME OF . . .  
CHARTING STRATEGIES FOR ACTIVATING BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE**

**WHY** Accessing background knowledge helps readers to remember important ideas and to anticipate the internal organization of different types of reading material. Readers who connect what they read to what they already know are more likely to make appropriate inferences for text ideas that are not explicitly stated.

**WHO** These strategies are designed to provide young or poor readers with the prerequisite background knowledge for interpreting a passage as well as a way of framing their thinking for future reading. These strategies can also be used with nonreaders by having the text read aloud and the nonreaders respond orally.

**WHAT** Any appropriate narrative or expository text.

**HOW** Yes/No . . . Why? To introduce this strategy, explain yes and no statements and give sample reasons for each. (A yes statement reflects an idea in the paragraph/passage that a reader knows about, appreciates, or understands. A no statement reflects an idea in a paragraph/passage that a reader dislikes, disputes, or does not comprehend.)

Begin reading the text, demonstrating the use of yes and no statements along with reasons why for each statement.

Continue reading, inviting readers to join in. After you have a sense that they understand the procedure, ask the readers to complete the text independently, filling in the Yes/No . . . Why? charts as they read.

Once all readers have had the opportunity to finish reading, share the completed charts. Examine the similarities and differences between reader s charts and discuss how individual s background knowledge makes a difference in how a reader understands/interprets printed text.

It Reminds Me Of . . . Introduce this chart the same way as the Yes/No . . . Why? chart. Discuss how proficient readers bring their schema to bear when they are reading, making connections between their background knowledge and experiences and the text they are reading.

Post reading discussions can focus on ways that background knowledge helps to make understanding reading easier and more enjoyable.

**HOW ELSE** Small groups can negotiate shared meaning as they construct these charts together.

Readers can be led to closely examine unfamiliar concepts in material they have either identified as unknown no s or failed to note as it reminds me of . . .

**YES/NO . . . WHY?  
IT REMINDS ME OF . . .**

*Example of 'Yes/No . . . Why?' chart for recording individual responses*

Student's Name _____		
Paragraph #, Page #	My Yes and Why?	My No and Why?

*Example of 'It Reminds Me Of . . .' chart for recording individual responses*

Student's Name _____	
Paragraph #, Page #	It Reminds Me Of . . .



## TALKING DRAWINGS

**Purpose:** To activate schema  
To provide information that shapes future teaching  
To provide a vehicle for students to measure learning

**Process:** Invite students to draw (sketch) a picture that shows everything they know about the subject they are going to explore. Ask them to let their drawings carry their entire background knowledge. Provide a short time for sketching.

Once everyone has their schema represented in their drawing, have the students turn to a neighbor and tell the neighbor about their drawings and all about the topic. The students can look for differences and similarities between their drawings. The students can also be encouraged to discuss how they know what they know (i.e. they have read about the topic, they have seen a movie, etc.). The students can add one and two word labels to their drawings, which capture major concepts from their background knowledge.

Collect the drawings and use the information they contain to develop the unit of study, etc. These initial drawings can also be used as a basis of comparison after the unit of study is completed (i.e. have the students draw a post talking drawing and compare it to the pre drawing).

**source:** *Talking Drawings: A Strategy for Assisting Learners* by Suzanne McConnell, Journal of Reading, December 1992/January 1993.

# USING PRIOR KNOWLEDGE-SCHEMA

From Developing Expertise in Reading Comprehension  
by Pearson, Roehler, Dole, Duffy

Reading is seen as an active process of constructing meaning by connecting old knowledge with new information encountered in text.

Each of us prints a unique personal stamp on every act of reading we undertake.

New information is learned and remembered best when it is integrated with relevant prior knowledge.

Young readers and poor readers often do not activate their prior knowledge.

Misconceptions are schemata too. Poor readers can be taught to alter prior ideas by doing activities like D.E.D.?

Good readers use their prior knowledge to:

- make predictions
- visualize
- ask questions to monitor comprehension
- draw inferences
- confirm hypothesis That s what I expected
- determine what s important in text
- demonstrate to others that they have understood what they have read

There are three kinds of prior knowledge:

- 1) specific knowledge about the topic of the text
- 2) general world knowledge about social relationships and casual structures
- 3) knowledge about the text s organization (genre)

Poor readers need to be taught that they already have ideas in their heads, and that they can use those ideas to help them understand what they read.

HOW: By modeling our own out-loud thinking with a variety of texts. Watch me think out loud and I ll show you how to get your background knowledge ready.

Then, by doing lots of guided practice before students are sent to practice on their own. Next, have readers transfer their learning to new reading materials. Finally, allow for many opportunities to share how strategy helped the understanding of their reading.

Ways to help children activate prior knowledge:

Double Entry Diaries

I wonder if this is going to be about . . . Oh, I know that! Now I get it!

What I know . . . What I want to know . . . What I learned . . .

Think Alouds (This reminds me of . . . This is just like . . .)

Brainstorming

Do you choose books to read based on your interest and background?

How does your life impact the reading of this book? Are you like anyone in this book?

Really good readers do that all the time. They think of their own lives as they read a book.

What does this story mean to me?

Reading is a way to connect with other people's lives.

Why is this a perfect book for you?

As you read, do you ever think about the answers you already have in your head?

When you come to a confusing part, ask yourself, What do I think is supposed to occur here? How does it fit with what the author says?

What do you already know about this topic?

What comes to your mind as you read this title?

Does this theme or author's style of writing remind you of other books you've read?

What do you already know about reading a poem, fiction story, newspaper article, phone book, list of instructions, report, or a map?

Are you familiar with similar human conditions? Have you ever known fear or prejudice?

\*\*\* For you as a reader, why is it important to think about what you already know? How does this strategy help you understand what you read? Could you advise other students about the procedure you use to call on your background knowledge? \*\*\*

Connecting reading and writing: Authors write about things they know.

Children reveal a voice when they reach into territory they know. Graves.

Memoir and personal narrative

Literature Logs: A place for students to record thoughts, feelings and reactions to their reading. Research shows that children are better prepared for a share session when they write about their reading first.

These entries provide teachers with a window into children's thinking as they identify their own connection with the story. We need to challenge our readers to go back to the text to support their initial ideas.

Great books help children build schema. Here are some of my favorites. This list is by no means complete. Let's work together to add to this selection.

It's A Good Thing There Are Insects, (Rookie)

Dawn, Uri Shulevitz

The Good-Bye Book, Judith Viorst

A Beach Day, Douglas Florian

Fireflies!, Julie Brinckloe

In the Middle of the Night, Henderson

Whispering in the Park, Burstein

Tight Times, Barbara Shook Hazen

All Those Secrets of the World, Jane Yolen

A River Dream, Allen Say

A Country Far Away, Nigel Gray

The Day of Ahmed's Secret, Heide

The Wall, Eve Bunting

Rose Blanche, Innocent

War Boy, Foreman

Hutchins with special thanks to Ulm, Keene, Benson

# PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OR SCHEMA

*Pearson, Dole, Roehler, Duffy*

Reading as a process of actively constructing of meaning and connecting prior knowledge with new information.

3 kinds of prior knowledge or schema

- Topic specific knowledge
- General world knowledge
- Text organization or structure knowledge including author knowledge

*Caine and Caine*

Our brains constantly build connections based on what we experience and how.

Use past experiences . . . to update and construct ongoing interactions.

Critical to relate new information with what one already knows and wants to know.

Experiences provide background with how receive and construct incoming information.

Message to educators is to capitalize on students existing knowledge in teaching new information.

*Brooks and Brooks*

Idiosyncratic constructions of prior knowledge and experiences form the basis of the frameworks of thinking we use to consider all phenomena.

Buddy and Keene, 1996